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CHALLENGE

JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

February 5, 2003 Volume 38 #02 Suggested Donation $.50 www.plp.org

BUSH, DEMOCRATS:

WARMAKERS, INC.

The large anti-war marches on January 18 prove that many people oppose the mass butchery U.S. rulers are planning in Iraq. But peace and the profit system are incompatible. War is the normal state of affairs under capitalism. *CHALLENGE* can't predict the immediate future. Perhaps Bush will intensify the air war over Iraq within the next couple of weeks and then launch a ground war by early March. Perhaps a coalition of European, Russian and Arab bosses opposed to U.S. policy can throw a monkey wrench into this scheme and force a temporary delay.

But war is the absolute certainty. U.S. imperialists cannot tolerate a challenge to their world supremacy. This supremacy depends upon the control of cheap oil to run the military, industry and war production. Iraq has the planet's second-largest reserves and represents a strategic key to the command of the oil treasures in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait. The coming oil war in Iraq is a war to establish U.S. bosses' world domination for the foreseeable future.

U.S. rulers have set the standard for mass murder. They alone have used nuclear weapons. Their arsenal includes "depleted uranium" bombs with a half-life of several billion years that create cancer epidemics. The workers and children of Iraq have tasted this atrocity since 1991, as did those of the former Yugoslavia during Clinton's aerial bombardments of 1999. More recently Afghanistan received the same treatment. Now the bosses are about to outdo themselves.

The coming war heralds a new period of imperialist mayhem. U.S. imperialism will have to occupy Iraq in order to control its oilfields. It can then try to take over the entire Arabian Peninsula.

For the European rulers, U.S. power is already greater than they would like. Seizure of the Arabian Peninsula would be intolerable. For the Arab rulers, an Iraq completely dominated by Washington and Exxon Mobil-Chevron Texaco et al. would be equally unbearable. These are the raw materials of much wider armed conflict. The Russians and Chinese, who have a tremendous stake in the oil of the Persian Gulf, will eventually increase their own military commitments there. No peace marches can alter the basic laws of capitalism. The drive for maximum profit requires a parallel drive for world domination and always leads to war.

But within the horror of imperialist war lies revolutionary opportunities for the working class. As the rulers' atrocities mount, millions of workers and others will seek explanations and solutions that only communist revolution can provide. Large numbers of body bags can eventually turn peace marches into rebellions, strikes, and uprisings, in the bosses' military and throughout the U.S. Anti-U.S. rebellions throughout the Arab world are only a matter of time.

The spread of violent inter-imperialist rivalry will inevitably lead to sharpening class struggle. This can lead to an upsurge in revolutionary consciousness and the growth of revolutionary forces everywhere.

Communists in PLP are both realists and optimists. We are realists because we reject illusions about the nature of imperialism and the possibility that it can produce a peaceful, decent society. We know that war is the profit system's Frankenstein. But we are optimists because history has proven that communist leadership can turn imperialist war into mass revolution to wipe out the warmakers and their monstrous system. This is the historical experience of the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions. It is also our own, having played an important role in launching and leading militant mass struggle against U.S. genocide in Vietnam.

Many anti-war demonstrators are looking for answers. We must struggle to win them to communist ideas. The response of workers, students, soldiers and others to our modest efforts in the factories, the military, the

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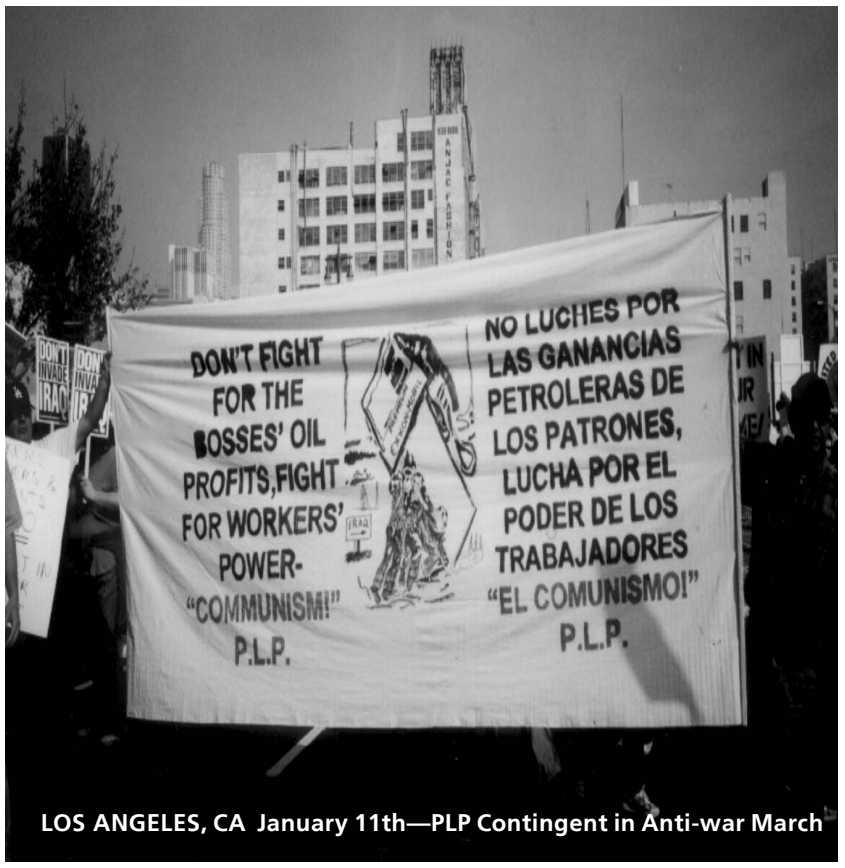
DON'T FIGHT FOR THE BOSSES' OIL PROFITS,FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER- "COMMUNISM!" P.L.P.
NO LUCHES POR LAS GANANCIAS PETROLERAS DE LOS PATRONES, LUCHA POR EL PODER DE LOS TRABAJADORES "EL COMUNISMO!" P.L.P.

LOS ANGELES, CA January 11th—PLP Contingent in Anti-war March

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 18— Hundreds of thousands of workers and youth rallied and marched against the imminent war in Iraq today. PLP organized a rally at one corner where speakers condemned the profit system that motivates and causes imperialist wars. Some speakers exposed the anti-war movement's call for peace through "lesser evil" Democrat politics. During the march, PLP lead a contingent in chants. Some marchers, led by liberal 'misleaders' started chanting "Impeach Bush, Impeach Bush!" PLP'ers were booed by SEIU hacks when leading chants against both Republicans AND Democrats as two sides of the same capitalist coin. During the day, PLP'ers handed out hundreds of *CHALLENGES* and thousands of the new pamphlet, "*Control of Iraqi Oil: Key for U.S. Bosses' Plan to Rule World: Organize to Smash Cause of War: Capitalism*"

Liberals, Democrats Delivering Anti-War Movement Into Hands of Imperialist Bosses

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan 18 — Friends and comrades from around the West Coast brought the much-needed message of international communist revolution as the solution to imperialist war and fascism to the liberal-led march against war in Iraq. Our multi-racial contingent struggled to lead workers away from the dead-end politics of the liberals and Democratic Party politicians.

We underestimated the amount of literature we could distribute. Little more than half-way into the five-hour march we had already passed out all of it. Many were hungry for a communist perspective.

We said workers can never achieve peace by supporting the Democrats or any capitalist leader. Only a communist party organizing workers, soldiers and students to make a revolution will create a worker-run world based on the needs of the working class, not on bosses' profits.

One comrade told a crowd at a rally we organized inside the march that GIs played a big role in helping defeat U.S. imperialism in Vietnam: "The secret the liberals will never tell you is that during the Vietnam War GIs refused to fight for U.S. imperialism. Soldiers are working-class people like you and me who are forced into the military because they don't have jobs or money for school. Soldiers have minds and can fight for the working class, not the bosses' profits. Workers can also stop production of military equipment like helicopters, planes and bombs."

Of course, a huge difference exists between the opposing forces in Vietnam as compared to the coming war in Iraq. It was the Vietnamese workers' and peasants' struggle that actually defeated U.S. imperialism and inspired millions here to support them. Currently Iraq is led by a murderous capitalist, Saddam Hussein, who's fighting to continue oppressing Iraqi workers. The international working class must side with those workers and oppose both U.S. and Iraqi bosses.

Organizing against the bosses' war will become more possible and necessary as the ruling class cuts all state and city budgets, eliminating vital social services to pay for their war and their internal police state.

The large task before us involves not only these big marches but especially our day-to-day work, entering a period in which PLP can grow if we fight the bosses' attacks, shatter the illusions many have in liberal politicians and expose the opportunist "left" serving the Democratic Party.

We were much more organized today than in past marches.

Afterwards at a dinner, we talked about our experiences this day and the difference it made to have a more organized, larger PLP presence. It showed we have more opportunities to win workers and youth fed up with the liberals' illusions. Everyone was invited to march for communism on May Day and join with workers worldwide.✪

Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, Soros Fund Pacifist Media

LOS ANGELES, Jan 20 — On Jan. 11, 15,000 people marched and rallied here against the war in Iraq. PLP members participated holding a rally, selling *CHALLENGE* and distributing thousands of leaflets. Our exposure of the bosses' politicians, from Bush to the Democrats, and of capitalism's drive for maximum profits as the cause of war, and our call for communist revolution, were cheered by many workers and youth.

This is the opposite of what the leaders of the anti-war movement have in mind. At the end of the march, the master of ceremonies thanked Pacifica radio for building it so consistently. This symbolized the fact that this movement is being financed (and its leadership ideologically controlled) by liberal sections of the ruling class, including the Ford and Carnegie Foundations, part of the Rockefeller-led Eastern Establishment (see below). When Democratic Congresswoman Maxine Waters spoke against a unilateral war and against Bush, it implied that a UN-sponsored war is O.K. Meanwhile, the entire U.S. Congress is carrying out the capitalists' drive to force workers to pay for imperialist war.

So far this anti-war movement is being built from the top, unlike the one against the Vietnam War, initially sparked by anti-imperialist and anti-racist actions on the campuses and in the factories and barracks. The Cultural Revolution in China and the 1968 general strike in France also inspired tens of millions to oppose imperialism.

The anti-war movement was given a tremendous boost by the anti-racist, anti-cop rebellions that shook most inner cities in the U.S. The 82nd Airborne Division, scheduled for duty in Vietnam, was pulled back by President Johnson in order to put down the 1967 Detroit rebellion.

Although many people respond out of anger about the coming war and growing fascism, the big marches have been publicized and supported by Pacifica Radio, the Nation/Nation Institute and liberal groups associated with them. The Jan. 18 marches were reported in the more mainstream media and drew praise from the *New York Times*. (Editorial, 1/20)

In 1951, Pacifica Foundation received a $150,000 grant from the Ford Foundation's Fund for Education (whose first head was a president of Shell Oil). This was part of a Cold War CIA-Ford program to develop an anti-communist liberal "left." For a while Pacifica Radio (parent of KPFA, KPFK, WBAI and other stations) took a more independent financial course, but in the 1990s, its leadership sought and received large infusions of ruling class cash, from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation and multi-billionaire George Soros.

Amy Goodman used $100,000 from the Carnegie and Ford Foundations to organize "Democracy Now!" She's also supported by Soros and by the J.M Kaplan Fund (Welch Grape Juice money), which backs the Nation Institute as well.

Ford and Carnegie are Eastern establishment strongholds, with close and long-standing ties to the Rockefeller-led ruling class through corporate interlocks and through their Council on Foreign Relations.

Soros is no "lone ranger" billionaire. His holdings have included large chunks of Boeing and Lockheed stock, tobacco investments, Wal-Mart, CBS and Warner Communications. Bill Moyers, a Rockefeller foundation trustee for 12 years and a director in his Council on Foreign Relations, serves on the board of Soros' Open Society Institute and is President of the Schumann Foundation. The latter funds Alternet, *Mother Jones*, the Institute for Policy Analysis, and *Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting* (FAIR).

These media are doing everything possible to build an anti-communist, liberal, pacifist anti-war movement loyal to capitalism with the active support from forces within the U.S. ruling class.

Workers and students must not rely on the bosses' liberal media or their capitalist politicians who aim to contain our anger within the limits of their bloody system that inevitably creates war and mass misery. They want to win our hearts and minds to support U.S. "democracy" even as capitalist crisis drags us ever deeper into fascism.

The PLP is the only force capable of building a truly revolutionary movement to smash this vicious system of perpetual war, racism and fascist repression. Workers, soldiers and students are looking for answers to imperialist wars, but are being mis-led by the liberal politics of the anti-war movement leadership. We must spread PLP's ideas, and lead actions against the bosses' attacks, within liberal-led mass organizations and protests to counter the liberal misleaders.✪

WARMAKERS, INC

continued from front page

schools and the communities, proves that revolutionary optimism remains the order of the day. U.S. imperialists will start the next war. That is up to them, and we can't prevent it. But collectively, communist-led workers, soldiers and youth can determine the outcome. However long it takes, the international working class will raise its fist in triumph.✪

No 'Lesser Evil' Bosses in Dogfight Over Iraq

(From *Stratfor Weekly*, 1/14/03)

"Opponents of a war with Iraq, both European and Islamic, have tried to use the WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) issue and the United Nations apparatus to prevent a U.S. attack. It has become clear that this is not going to work….The motives of the anti-war nations are far from humanitarian. Many of the same countries that were agitating for war against Slobodan Milosevic suddenly find war with Iraq intolerable. Their real motivation is fear that the United States, once it occupies Iraq, will not only dominate the region, but use Iraq as a base from which to extend its control throughout the Arabian Peninsula….For…France, Germany, and Italy, an already unmanageable United States would swell in power….For…Saudi Arabia and Iran…U.S. military power on their borders, based in an Iraq completely under U.S. control, is something they don't want to think about. If Saddam Hussein's regime was destroyed through war, this would be the outcome."✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808
BROOKLYN, NY 11202
www.plp.org
email:
cd188@juno.com
718 630 9440

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Black and White Unite vs. Nazi Attack on Somalis

LEWISTON, MAINE, Jan. 11 — Today members and friends of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined with the working people of Maine to counter the appearance of the Nazis in the so-called World Church of the Creator (WCOC). Lewiston's racist mayor had sent letters to everyone in the Somali community saying they were not welcome here. This was a blatant invitation for the Nazi WCOC to whip up racism and rally in this city. All told, nearly 5,000 people turned out at two anti-Nazi demonstrations, an astounding total in a predominantly white city of 36,000, proving once again there is mass anti-racist sentiment among all sections of the working class.

PLP has a long history of fighting fascism, including a street battle in Wakefield, MA, in which WCOC members fled under police protection. We also mobilized to stop the Nazis here. Meetings of anti-racists, with PLP present, were organized in Lewiston by the Somali community. Our organizing meetings in Boston were especially good as many Somalis there decided to confront the Nazis.

PLP proposed two picket lines, one against the racist mayor and another against the Nazis' rally in a National Guard Armory. Another group, tied to the elected power structure, planned a so-called Many and One Rally at Bates College. PLP indicated that this only disarmed the anti-racists, leading people to believe the cops would protect us from the Nazis and that the elected officials cared about working people. PLP pointed out that cops only protect the Nazis and that an elected official initiated the racist attacks on the Somalis.

When the bus from Boston arrived, a picket line formed in front of Lewiston City Hall. Despite the cold weather, immediately more anti-racists joined, enlarging the line to nearly 100. Although the cops harassed us, we maintained our spirit and discipline. We called for the resignation of the mayor, who was vacationing in Florida.

Almost all the Lewiston residents who joined our rally at City Hall agreed to go to the armory to confront the WCOC Nazis. We all squeezed into the bus and vans. The police had erected roadblocks near the armory but 150 demonstrators marched right through them.

At the armory a chaotic crowd of 400 anti-racist demonstrators were held back by a line of cops. PLP established a picket line, allowing us to be visible as a group. We chanted "Hey, Nazis, you can't hide! We charge you with genocide!" On our bullhorn speakers explained how capitalism spawned racism and fascism and why it needed to be overthrown. Some said racism was used to divide working people into accepting war for oil while we have no health care.

We then held an open mike. Most people advanced our anti-racist position, but a few people said Somalis and PLP were "outsiders," showing the need to intensify our anti-racist activity.

Amid 20 degree weather, we picketed for over three hours until we were sure the Nazis were gone. We were unable to confront them as we had in Wakefield, MA.

A PLP contingent went to the Bates rally and distributed hundreds of PLP flyers. The 5,000 people there were genuine anti-racists but misled into listening to Maine's governor and senators. There was no open mike there, reflecting the political bosses' fear of what working people might say.

On the return to Boston, the Somali people thanked PLP for standing up to racism and giving leadership to working people against the Nazis.

Ford Profited From Worker's Murder But Fight-Back Continues

MÉXICO — Thirteen years ago on Jan. 8, Ford bosses and their Mexican Labor Federation (CTM) union hacks murdered foundry worker Cleto Urbina.

Ford workers were fighting to get rid of the corrupt and murderous Uriarte-led CTM leadership and were demanding payment of a year-end bonus.

At 5 A.M,, Ford brought in 200 goons armed with guns and chains and dressed in work uniforms to look like they worked at the Ford Cuautitlan plant. When the workers fought back with their tools, the cowardly goons ran like chickens. While fleeing, they shot at the workers, killing Cleto and injuring 10 others. Angry workers chased the goons, capturing several and seized the entire plant. The bosses fled with their goons and hacks.

The workers held the plant for one month, demanding the killers be punished. Workers donated food from all over the metropolitan area to feed them. After a month, hundreds of cops helped by helicopters, broke into the plant, ousted the workers, and returned the factory to Ford. But resistenace continued. The plant remained closed for over two months.

Ford and the CTM leaders were exonerated of any guilt. Only one goon went to jail. During this struggle, *DESAFIO-CHALLENGE* was circulated among the strikers, spreading the idea that only communist revolution will make the bosses and their goons pay for their crimes.

This battle and many others won Ford workers the respect of thousands of workers and instilled fear in the bosses. Many of us were blacklisted, making it extremely difficult to find new jobs.

In 2002, with support from the Labor Ministry, Ford used a proposed fascist bill still being debated in Congress to fire 1,500 workers before the bill even became law. This law would give bosses even more power to fire workers. Even more repressive conditions now exist at the plant, but workers' resistance continues.

In many ways, Cuautitlan Ford workers have shown that industrial workers are the key force in the fight against capitalism. In this period of war, economic crisis and worldwide fascism, revolutionary leadership among workers is the bosses' worst fear. Let's make this a reality. Workers of the world, unite!✪

WARMAKER-STRIKE-BREAKER — SMASH GE!

On January 1, General Electric (GE) more than doubled health care expenses for nearly 145,000 workers and retirees by an average of $400 yearly. On January 14 and 15, about 20,000 GE workers in 23 states conducted their first national strike since 1969. This is just a warm-up for GE. It wants a 30% co-payment from workers once the current contract expires in June.

The strikers are members of the International Union of Electrical Workers/Communications Workers of America (IUE/CWA) and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE). Since 1991, the percentage of unionized workers at GE's U.S. operations has fallen from 39% to under 25%, or 38,000 workers.

GE is one of the world's largest corporations, with 300,000 workers worldwide, and is a major war contractor. Last year its revenues totaled $125 billion, raking in a $16-billion profit. GE moans about rising health costs, but relative to profits their costs have actually declined. In 1989 the insurance bill was 13.6% of GE's gross profits. In 2001, it fell to only 7%, a 48% decrease.

These health care changes could transfer $30 million from workers' pockets to GE's profits. That's about the value of the various retirement homes GE has provided to former CEO Jack Welch (who continues to receive a $10 million-a-year pension). The increases will hit hardest when workers or their dependents are hospitalized, on multiple prescriptions, forced to see medical specialists, and are laid off, on sick leave, or retired.

COP CAR KILLS GE STRIKER

Michelle Rogers, a single mother with three teenage daughters, was struck and killed by a police car while picketing the GE Appliance Park in Louisville, Kentucky, GE's largest unionized facility in the U.S. Since the 1980's, the Louisville workforce has been slashed from 18,000 to 3,000, as GE wiped out 150,000 jobs worldwide. Despite the company's vow to continue production during the strike, the Louisville complex was shut tight. GE owns the NBC television network, which could explain the lack of coverage of Michelle's death.

The daughters of slain worker Michelle Rogers

GE's health cuts reflect the increased attacks on the working class in this period of growing war and fascism. The pro-capitalist union leaders are incapable of stopping them. In the name of "saving jobs" and "beating the foreign competition," they have collaborated with the bosses to cut costs and increase productivity. In the last national contract they reduced pay raises to preserve health benefits. Now IUE/CWA President Edward Fire says he wants to help GE lower health care costs, but the company won't meet with him.

The 1969 strike occurred at the height of the Vietnam War. Nixon pleaded with the strikers to return to work because they were hurting the war effort. In Schenectady, NY, strikers on the picket lines chanted, "Screw the War Effort!" At a massive anti-war rally in Washington, D.C., PLP and the Worker-Student Alliance leadership of SDS led a breakaway march of over 10,000 people to the Department of Labor chanting, "Warmaker, Strikebreaker, Smash GE!"

A generation later, GE workers are fighting to keep what it took a lifetime to win, on the eve of more cutbacks and yet another imperialist invasion. Communist revolution is the only way off this endless treadmill of war and fascism.✪

The new face of basic industry: BOEING SALE NO TRIUMPH FOR WORKERS

SPOKANE, WA., Jan. 6 — Today former Boeing workers accepted the new International Association of Machinists (IAM) contract with the new owner of the plant, Triumph Group, Inc. Boeing threatened to close the plant if the workers rejected it. The IAM leadership at Boeing called it "a very good first contract."

Last week, Triumph laid off all 320 production workers, permanently fired 35, and accepted applications for rehire from a little less than 90%. Seniority was ignored. Those that remain took 15% wage cuts and lost their sick leave accrued under the old contract. In exchange, union leaders "won" important job security language that says Triumph does not "intend" to lay anybody off.

Those already laid off under the old contract lost their automatic recall rights that were "guaranteed" for six years. Instead, they will be put on a "preferential hiring list" for three years. The Triumph workers are now under the IAM National Pension Plan, an option long rejected by Boeing workers. Those near retirement will lose money. Benefits from the old pension will be frozen at current levels so senior workers will not gain from future increases in the Boeing plan, which are multiplied over years of employment.

Finally, union leaders boast that the Spokane plant will be a model for "team" concepts in the Triumph Group. One job category will cover all production workers, allowing the company to force workers to perform any job on the production floor. This "flexibility" is unsafe and a proven job-killer. A future "gainsharing" regime is to be negotiated, the modern day equivalent of piecework with the added twist of getting workers on the floor to push speedup.

Workers Know When They're Being Sold A Bill Of Goods

Boeing workers aren't falling for this "good news," particularly when learning that the same bosses who control Boeing will be reaping the profits from cheaper labor at the new Triumph plant (see adjoining article).

"Ever since 9/11, the big boys have been waving the flag and then screwing us," said one machinist. "What's the difference between this and what Enron did?" asked another. "The same guys that say we have to fight an oil war in Iraq are the same ones playing this shell game that cuts our wages!" "They say only scoundrels and criminals are the ones that resort to patriotism," bitterly added a thoroughly disgusted bench mechanic. We also discussed how the bosses divert our anger, exemplified by the immigration arrests in California.

Restructuring Basic Industry

The Boeing sale to Triumph mirrors a pattern being repeated throughout basic industry. Manufacturers, especially auto and aerospace companies, are subcontracting whole sections of production. Soon these subcontractors will actually add their parts to the final product, eliminating even more jobs in the basic manufacturing firms.

The bosses and their labor lieutenants spread the illusion that these subcontractors are "mom-and-pop" entrepreneurs. Actually, they're huge conglomerates financed by the same ruling-class banks that control basic industry today.

The AFL-CIO unions have failed to organize these subcontractors, leaving a gaping hole through which the bosses are now driving their profit machine. Many of these low-wage plants employ larger numbers of black, Latin and women workers, feasting on racist super-exploitation.

Today, basic industrial unions are holding on to union contracts at factories surrounded by non-union plants like Triumph Group. Essentially, the union "leadership" tries to "organize" by guaranteeing lower wages and more collaboration.

There are still millions of basic industrial workers in the U.S. More than 50% of autoworkers, steelworkers and coal miners have been shifted to these super-exploiting, subcontractor conglomerates. We must fight the demoralization caused by the "old-line" industrial unions' inability to respond to this restructuring.

The present crisis lays out the contradictions of capitalism more clearly. The potential exists to win these super-exploited workers to communist revolution. Anti-racism an class-consciousness are good starting points from which to reinvigorate class struggle among industrial workers.✪

Keeping It In The (Ruling Class) Family

At the last series of union meetings our union told us Triumph is a new company looking to "grow the business." They assure us, "this means jobs."

Formed through a leveraged buyout in 1993, Triumph now operates in 42 locations, employing nearly 4,000 workers in Washington State, Chicago, San Diego and the Los Angeles area. It's "growing" all right, approaching its first billion dollars in revenues in less than a decade. How?

The key player on Triumph's Board is Joseph M. Silvestri. He's Vice-President of Citicorp Venture Capital, Ltd., a subsidiary of Citigroup, one of the original Rockefeller banks. The Rockefellers and their Eastern money allies are the leading controlling group in the U.S. economy and already control Boeing. Now they've provided Triumph with the money, connections and political clout to buy up whole sections of the automotive and aviation fabrication industry.

A thread of interlocking directorates of big corporations and banks runs through and around Boeing, which has a long history of connections to Citigroup. Boeing Chairman Emeritus Frank Shrontz and director Rozanne Ridgeway were on the Board of Citicorp, the precursor of Citigroup. Ridgeway is also connected to Citigroup through membership in the Council on Foreign Relations, the premier U.S. foreign policy think-tank. She and Senior Boeing Vice-President for International Relations Thomas Pickering meet with Citigroup Board member and former CIA director John Deutch.

Boeing CEO and Chairman Phil Condit joins Verizon Vice-Chairman and President, Lawrence Babbio, Jr. on the Board of Hewlett-Packard. The other Verizon Vice-Chairman and President, Michael Masin, sits on the Citigroup Board.

Boeing director Kenneth Duberstein is on the ConocoPhillips Board along with William Rhodes, Senior Vice-Chairman Citgroup, Inc. and Citbank, Ltd.

Thus Boeing's sale of its Spokane plant to Triumph represents a gigantic and very profitable shell game. The same ruling class controls both firms. The same parts still get manufactured, but with workers taking a 15% pay cut, if we're lucky enough not to be one of the 35 who permanently lost their jobs. Triumph "grows the business" by slicing off chunks of basic industry and slashing wages and jobs of these workers.✪

THE RICH GET RICHER ...WORKERS GET EVICTED

DETROIT, MI — On the morning of December 11, more than 100 residents were evicted from a city-owned apartment building at 71 West Willis. The residents were not behind in their rent. Democratic mayor Kwame Kilpartrick ordered the eviction in order to sell the building and convert it into luxury apartments.

The following day, Kilpatrick, Matt Cullen of General Motors and Kresge Foundation president John Marshall III announced plans for major investments by the corporations and the city, state and federal governments into the redevelopment of this area, which connects Wayne State University to Comerica Park and Ford Field, the new Compuware world headquarters now under construction and the new GM world headquarters.

A Vietnam veteran returned from the Veterans Administration hospital to find everything he owned, his discharge papers and personal possessions, piled into the gutter by Wayne County Sheriff's Deputies. "The only thing I have left is what's on my back," he said.

GM and Chrysler each received $500 million in tax abatements, financed by cuts in education, health care and city services. When GM moved its world headquarters to the Renaissance Center in 1998, the state pledged $140 million for freeway improvements and a park. The federal government will fund seawall improvements and a new Port Authority terminal. The city will pay $180 million for parking and other improvements.

Meanwhile, the Coalition on Temporary Shelter reports 5,800 homeless in Detroit, with only 3,700 emergency beds available. Poverty is increasing and thanks to Clinton's budget cuts and Bush's war budget, there is little or nothing left of public assistance for the people who wander the streets, huddle in abandoned buildings, or for those who will join them because of Mayor Kilpatrick's eviction order.

Capitalism and Workers' Healthcare Don't Mix

MEXICO CITY, Jan.18 — The Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) provides health care to more than half the population of this country. Ruling-class plans for privatization mean that by 2005, IMSS might not exist. That means there will be no new hospitals or clinics, no maintenance for existing ones and no new diagnostic or treatment equipment. Millions of workers may wind up without health care, and those who can afford some will get lousy service.

Director Santiago Levy, faithful ruling-class servant, blames the workers for the IMSS bankruptcy. "The union contract is too generous…the IMSS employees are inefficient…the cost of health care for senior citizens is too high." He says workers' wages are the main problem and is firing 5,000 while looking to fire more, with no opposition from the pro-boss union leaders.

Levy hypocritically attacks the workers, but upon taking office he increased salaries for himself and other corrupt officials. The bosses freeze hiring while firing pregnant women workers. Many are denied their 3-month leave to give birth because they "lack seniority." Levy says retirement pensions are a burden. Yet thousands of workers have given their best years to the IMSS. Never did this wolf in sheep's clothing blame the corrupt public officials who fraudulently enriched themselves nor the bosses who never paid their Social Security fees.

The capitalists and politicians like Levy are the biggest burdens. We should follow the example of workers in El Salvador who struck for months to stop privatization there.

Capitalism and decent health care for workers don't mix. Like everything else under this system, health care is a business. The lab owners producing the medications and the medical equipment, the companies providing medical units, the construction bosses who build medical centers, the big private hospital corporations and the corrupt health officials all profit from workers' bad health. High infant and maternity mortality rates are rising while these mercenaries stuff their pockets.

Corruption will not end by replacing corrupt officials while retaining the capitalist profit system. We invite all IMSS workers and doctors to join and build a mass PLP to destroy this anti-worker system. Only communist revolution can resolve our problems, with a society based on workers' needs. Unite to support the doctor's struggles in Vera Cruz, Chiapas and Oaxaca.✪

WORKERS OF THE WORLD WRITE!

STEELWORKERS OPPOSE IRAQ WAR

USWA Local 1011 passed a resolution at their January meeting which stated, "We value the lives of our sons and daughters and brothers and sisters more than Bush's oil profits. We have no quarrel with the people of Iraq who will suffer the most." The resolution passed without one dissenting vote. These are former LTV workers who now work for ISG. CHALLENGE readers will recall, LTV died a painful death, costing workers millions in wages, pensions and health care. Many are Vietnam vets. They have learned the hard way the "guarantees" of capitalism. Some workers are wearing anti-war buttons, and a small group attended the Jan. 11 anti-war rally in Chicago.

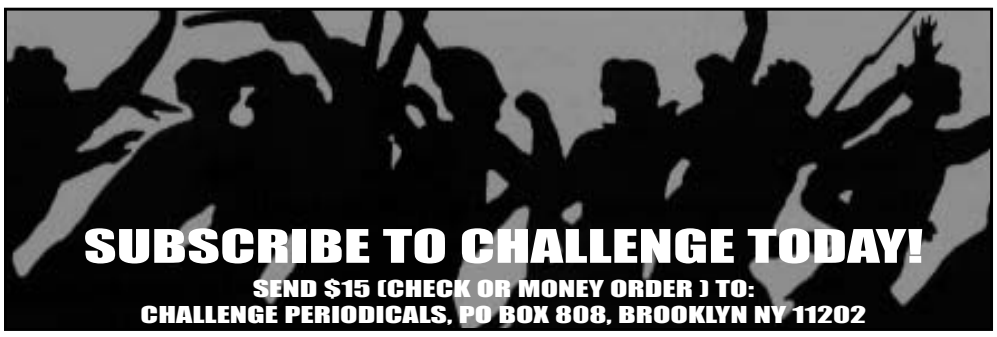
More and more workers are taking a stand against this blood for oil war that will kill Iraqi and US workers. Teachers, postal workers, AFSCME workers, steel workers and others have passed resolutions condemning Bush's oil war.

These are all good first steps, but not nearly enough. It's all been pretty easy. When the Bush murderers start the war, the stakes will rise. Thousands will die. Racist, right-wing patriotism will sky rocket. Those who oppose the war will be called traitors.

In the coming days, we must do everything we can to win workers to the anti-imperialist camp. A worker wearing a button that says "No blood for oil"; a worker who distributes CHALLENGE; a worker who backs up a comrade in a lunchroom discussion; these can all become bullets in the war against the bosses.

Some folks in the anti-war movement think demonstrations; vigils and liberals will stop the war. We have no such illusions. The US ruling class will kill millions to control the world's oil supplies. They will have their war. But every worker who stands with us in this fight is a potential recruit to PLP.

Three Finger Slim



'U.S. Labor Against the War'

On January 11, more than 100 trade union leaders and activists gathered at the Teamsters Local 705 hall in Chicago to launch U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW).

Local 705 is the country's second largest Teamsters Local, composed mostly of UPS workers. They hosted the meeting after passing an anti-war resolution.

Dozens of unions have passed anti-war resolutions across the U.S. In the Chicago area, aside from Local 705, the Chicago Teachers Union voted to send a bus to the Jan. 18 march, and local unions of postal and steel workers passed anti-war resolutions with relative ease. PLP members have been involved in much of this activity.

A continuations committee, backed by $30 million from AFSCME and SEIU, was established to set up local chapters. There is already one in New York (NYCLAW). Has the AFL-CIA leopard changed its spots? Are anti-imperialist union leaders bombarding the AFL-CIO headquarters? Do you want to buy the Brooklyn Bridge?

A few aspects appear to comprise this development. First and foremost is that the working class, including those in the military, is not won to supporting U.S. imperialism and the invasion of Iraq. There is a mass, undeveloped anti-imperialist sentiment. Also, many union leaders on many levels, whether they are organized into "leftist" parties or not, were influenced by the anti-Vietnam War and Civil Rights movements and/or Vietnam veterans. They reflect the mass anti-imperialist consciousness that affected tens of millions, a great deal of it due to the efforts of PLP.

The AFL-CIO leadership recognizes this sentiment and wants to get behind it to co-opt it in service of the liberal bosses. The Democratic Party sees the mass anti-war sentiment as a potential battering ram against Bush and the Republicans. Even the political hacks and errand boys on the Chicago City Council voted 45-1 against "Bush's rush to war," the very same misleaders who sell out workers daily. The smorgasbord of opportunist "leftist" parties are all too eager to be the foot soldiers of the Democrats, who want war and control of oil but on their terms.

But what about PLP? What are our opportunities in the current period? We are also subject to opportunism and must wage a relentless struggle against it. There is a basis of unity with thousands of workers on our jobs and in our unions, against racism and war. We must use that unity to sharpen the ideological struggle, expose the opportunists, help the workers shed their illusions and win them to communist revolution and PLP. The main aspect of this struggle is to win more workers to read and distribute *CHALLENGE*.

We should investigate how to relate to Labor Against War, but the main opportunity is to build a mass base for PLP, concentrating in shops, the military and on campuses. Resolutions are only helpful if we use them to organize our co-workers into action. Regular readers and distributors of *CHALLENGE* will be the ones most open to supporting and organizing job actions and union battles. Short of that, all roads lead to the Democratic Party, and ultimately to war.

A Reader

Rebel vs. Factory Concentration Camps

The workers of Avellana/Outkeen here in Mexico are rebelling against layoffs. The bosses want to "do more with less," meaning cut costs by firing workers while increasing productivity. "Modernization" is turning the factories into concentration camps, where workers have no rights nor can they claim any by law.

If we believe the company line — "more productivity will win markets and secure our jobs" — we will lose. Under capitalism only the bosses win. If we unite with other workers to fight, we can build a movement of millions, not only to stop layoffs but to smash capitalism.

Workers produce everything. Why do we need the parasite bosses? They belong in the garbage can of history. We need communism. This is the only way we will be free and enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Factory Red

Racist War on Terrorism Hits All California Workers

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 20 — "It's not a question of comfort or discomfort, it's a question of living or dying." (Los Angeles Times, 1/11).

That's one worker's reaction to Gov. Gray Davis's "solution" to California's budget crisis. He's threatening $21 billion in budget cuts and tax hikes of $8.3 billion, all on the backs of the working class. Here is the racist war-on-workers scorecard:

•Cut $3.6 billion from Medi-cal, eliminating 570,000 recipients, ending adults' physical therapy;

•Chop $1.6 billion from mass transit;

•Slash education by $4.6 billion, meaning layoffs and larger classes;

•Reduce welfare payments 6.2%, including SSI and aid to the blind;

•Lay off state workers and cut wages for those remaining;

•Double fees at community colleges;

•Increase of $400/year at Cal State Universities and $800 at the Univ. of California, leading to wholesale dropouts.

That's for working-class families. At least 70 % of those most affected by the cuts in Medi-Cal and welfare are black and Latin. Among children the figure is higher. Racism is the cutting edge of these attacks on all workers. The only sector NOT cut? Prisons, maintaining a $5.3 billion budget, while building more. The flip side is enriching the wealthy: $2.9 billion in "debt service" to the banker-bondholders, paid by law before anything else. County governments owe these bankers $19 billion in interest and principal. LA alone owes them $14.5 billion and another $1.5 billion to related "authorities." Meanwhile, there's no law mandating Enron and Dynergy repay the $15 billion stolen from California taxpayers from the false energy shortage they created to jack up electricity prices

Corporate taxes in California are very low with no plans to increase them. In fact, when the dot.com bubble burst, California tax revenues dropped 25%. In the 1990s, billions were invested in speculative gambles rather than production, leading to the inevitable decline in profits when the bubble — not based on real value — burst.

Capitalism is based on profits for the few and wage slavery for the many. Vital public services come from taxing the value workers have created. But there's no profit in using these taxes to lift the poor out of poverty. Since the bosses make super-profits from racist super-exploitation of black and Latin workers, these cuts affect them the sharpest. The bosses need all our money to pay off the bankers, prop up the bond and-stock markets and go to war for control of oil and U.S. imperialist world domination.

The Federal government is cutting money it sends to the states (which also comes primarily from workers' taxes) to pay for a $400 billion war budget. Maintaining U.S. troops in the oil-rich Middle East costs $60 billion a year. A war in Iraq, in addition to killing hundreds of thousands of workers, will cost $1.9 trillion for a decade of U.S. occupation of that country.

Some union leaders "protest" Bush' war plans but refuse to organize any serious challenge to the bosses' war budget. In fact, the AFL-CIO proudly claimed credit for electing Davis Governor, the very Davis who's waging a war on the workers and youth of California to bail out the bankers and war-makers. They build confidence in the capitalist system and its laws. Relying on these traitors is dangerous.

Workers and students throughout California need to organize a massive fight, including local and general strikes, against these cuts, the tax increases and to stop the billion-dollar payments to the banks. If the bosses claim such a moratorium would "ruin" California's credit rating and cut off any further loans, that will simply expose this capitalist system as unworkable for workers, where maximum profits and wars for oil come at the expense of workers' lives. We urge all workers, students and soldiers join the fight to end the rule of profits by fighting for a communist society where all the value produced by the working class will be used to meet the needs of our class. ✪

RELY ON THE WORKERS TO FIGHT POLICE TERROR

CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD., Jan. 11 — Twenty members of the People's Coalition for Police Accountability (PCPA) held a community rally here today, near the District of Columbia where cop Charles Ramsuer shot Desmond Ray in the back last December, paralyzing him for life. The police were conducting a raid on an alleged drug house when Ramsuer shot the unarmed, 22-year-old Ray as he walked towards his sister's house. They were looking for someone who had not lived there for seven years.

Ramseur has again shown that cops are in the forefront of the bosses' war to terrorize workers, particularly black and Latin. This was Ramseur's fourth shooting! He was already on our "Dirty Dozen" cop list due to his last unjustified shooting. As we marched along Marlboro Pike and Southern Avenue, car horns blared in solidarity with our signs condemning police brutality and calling for Ramseur's indictment. Then we marched through the neighborhood with Ray's family, distributing flyers and getting over 130 signatures on petitions. The PCPA vowed to take the community rally strategy to Forestville next, where Ray lives.

This action energized the PCPA more than previous ones directed at county officials. By turning directly to the working class to build a base, the PCPA is embarking on a powerful strategy that can create a mass movement against racist police brutality, and shake the halls of power in Prince George's County. ✪

ANTHRAX, APARTHEID, AND THE FBI

The FBI is hunting for evidence linking bio-warfare researcher Steven Hatfill to the anthrax attacks that followed 9/11. According to Attorney General Ashcroft, Hatfill is a "person of interest," not an official suspect. Whether or not he killed the five people who were exposed to mailed anthrax spores, he is definitely not "innocent." The investigation has uncovered his ties to the fascist Rhodesian and South African white supremacist regimes.

Soon after the 2001 anthrax attacks, Barbara Hatch Rosenberg of the Federation of American Scientists accused the FBI of "dragging its feet" in investigating obvious leads to defense research. She described how Hatfill had access to anthrax and the motive to use it. By early December 2001, genetic fingerprinting raised the possibility that the anthrax spores came from one of a handful of U.S. labs engaged in bio-weapons research but the FBI didn't demand bacteria samples from the labs until March. All anthrax samples were the "Ames" strain, developed by the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Disease (USAMRIID) at Ft. Detrick, MD., Hatfill's former employer. The spores were "weaponized" — powdered to maximize their spread — by a secret process invented by Army scientists and requiring sophisticated equipment.

Hatfill joined the Army's Institute for Military Assistance in the 1970's. He moved to Ian Smith's fascist Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), where he obtained an M.D. From 1975-'78, while still in the U.S. military, Hatfill served as a mercenary with Rhodesia's Special Air Squadron and the Selous Scouts, elite paramilitary forces engaged in "counter-insurgency" warfare against black guerrillas. Racist and anti-communist "dirty wars" backed by South Africa and the CIA killed 1.5 million people in the countries bordering South Africa, including Zimbabwe. The Selous Scouts carried out human experiments with chemical and biological agents. A now-declassified U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency report comments, "…a member of the Selous Scouts admitted in 1978 that they had tried both chemical and biological warfare techniques to kill terrorists."

At the peak of Zimbabwe's civil war (1978-1980), the world's biggest anthrax epidemic swept the "Tribal Trust Lands" (black "homelands"), affecting 10,738 black farmers and their cattle; 182 died. The region remains contaminated today. Meryl Nass of the Physicians for Social Responsibility charged the Rhodesian military with germ warfare. According to a former Rhodesian military officer, "the use of anthrax spoor to kill off the cattle of tribesmen…was carried out in conjunction with psychological suggestion…that their cattle were sick and dying because of disease introduced into Zimbabwe from Mozambique by the infiltrating guerillas."

According to Zimbabwe's Daily Mirror, Hatfill owed his medical school admission to Dr. Robert Symington, father of Rhodesia's bio-weapons program. In 1984, Hatfill moved to apartheid South Africa, where he joined the medical branch of the notorious South Africa Defense Force. Medical units of the SADF were linked to "Project Coast." Under Wouter Basson (aka "Dr. Death"), "Project Coast" was a massive bio-weapons operation, experimenting with plague, cholera and anthrax to assassinate African nationalists. The British New Statesman asks, "Were [Hatfill] to be publicly charged, might he have very damaging information to impart about U.S. assistance to the Rhodesian and South African regimes…about offensive biological warfare programs, even though the military insists it does defense research only? Might he not be a veritable landmine of dangerous, damaging and embarrassing information?"

Returning to the U.S. in the mid-90s, Hatfill worked at USAMRIID on Ebola and Marburg, two of the world's deadliest viruses. In 1999 he joined SAIC, a defense contractor whose major client is the CIA. Hatfill never officially worked with anthrax but his USAMRIID mentor was Bill Patrick, the Army scientist who weaponized anthrax. Under a CIA commission to the SAIC, Patrick wrote a report on possible scenarios following an anthrax attack through the mail.

If Hatfill is the killer, his motives are murky. But it's clear that the main beneficiary is the bio-defense industry, which is reaping a bonanza in the wake of the anthrax scare. According to David Franz, former Commander of USAMRIID, "I think a lot of good has come from it. From a biological or a medical standpoint, we've now five people who have died, but we've put about $6 billion in our budget into defending against bio-terrorism" (ABC News, 5/4/02)

This exposes U.S. hypocrisy in justifying war with Iraq over "weapons of mass destruction(WMD)." From Hiroshima to anthrax to depleted uranium, U.S. imperialism has been the major deployer of WMD since World War II. The current build-up in bio-defense research, along with plans for mass smallpox vaccination, goes beyond concern with an Iraqi military response. The rulers anticipate prolonged war in the Mid-East, against many potential enemies. Homeland Insecurity and bio-defense spending is preparing us for fascism and a perpetual state of war.

Sources: *New York Times*, 1/4/02; 7/2/02; 7/12/02; 7/19/02; 8/13/002; Science, 297: 1264-5; 23. M. Nass, PSR Quarterly, 1992, 2: 198-209. http://www.anthraxvaccine.org/zimbabwe.html; Hartford Courant, 3/4/02 http://www.fas.org/bwc/news/anthraxreport.htm; Guardian, 5/21/02; P. Keim et al. (2000) J Bacteriol 2000 May;182(10):2928-36, Mangold and Goldberg (1999) Plague Wars; The Mirror (Harare), 10/19/2002.✪

Order the New PLP Pamphlet, "Control of Iraqi Oil: Key for U.S. Bosses' Plan to Rule World: Organize to Smash Cause of War: Capitalism"

CHALLENGE
A PAMPHLET BY PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Control of Iraqi Oil: Key for U.S. Bosses' Plan to Rule World

ORGANIZE TO SMASH CAUSE OF WAR: CAPITALISM

INTRODUCTION

U.S. rulers have assembled the greatest, most destructive arsenal in world history. Since the middle of the Twentieth Century, from Hiroshima to Korea to Vietnam to Latin America, Africa and Kosovo, their bullets, bombs — including nuclear devices — and economic terrorism have let unleased Hitler in the murder of workers and children.

Now they are ready to unleash military havoc against the working class of Iraq in a gamble to dominate the world for the foreseeable future. This is the nature of capitalism — the profit system.

The butchery of imperialist war reveals the nature of capitalism in essence of workers, students and allies. During the Vietnam war, when the U.S. military slaughtered over three million people, rebellion were a daily occurrence - from Paris to Detroit to Mexico City to the U.S. GIs who "fragged" (killed) their own officers in Vietnam. Imperialist war opens the door to win to PLP's communist politics of turning the war into a mass revolutionary struggle to sweep away the warmakers - from the battlefronts to the factories, from schools to neighborhoods, from Washington to Baghdad.

The coming war isn't about "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)." Saddam has flown WMD's over them he did when the 1991 Gulf War began. The U.S. supplied him with much of the chemical and biological weapons he does possess, for use during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, when U.S. policymakers considered Iran their greatest threat in the Persian Gulf.

The "weapons inspections" are a hypocritical ploy designed to give Bush an excuse to launch a war that U.S. bosses consider a strategic necessity. At the heart of the matter lies the vast treasure of Iraqi oil - proven reserves of 112 billion barrels, second largest in the world after Saudi Arabia. In addition, "as many as 220 billion barrels of resources are deemed probable." ("Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq," Council on Foreign Relations-Baker Institute for Public Policy, p. 18)

For modern capitalism, oil is not just another commodity. It is the lifeline to economic and political power, fueling the factories, the transportation systems and the engines of war. It remains crucial to the production of everything from pharmaceuticals to computer chips. Whoever controls the cheapest, most abundant supplies, can wield extraordinary power over its rivals.

For the U.S. ruling class, world domination is a matter of necessity, flowing from the character of the profit system. As Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific communism, understood 150 years ago, the capitalists require maximum profit.

Imperialism generates bloody capitalist rivalries while it impoverishes and slaughters the workers of the world. As it was some 100 years ago, this inevitably leads to war.

PLP banner at Jan. 11 Los Angeles anti-war rally. While no peace movement has ever stopped imperialist war, revolutions have smashed imperialist warmakers. During World War I, the Bolsheviks won Russian soldiers to join workers and make revolution in 1917.

...BUT SUPREMACY IS RELATIVE AND DOESN'T MEAN OMNIPOTENCE

Hindsight here exposes the paradox of "super-power" imperialism. For over a decade, no rival force has been able to challenge U.S. military, economic, or political might. Yet during that same time, the most lethal assaults in history has not managed to unseat a petty tyrant. Hussein, the U.S. government calls the worst murderer of an "axis of evil." This alone should teach us that even the most powerful imperialist in the world must operate within limitations.

These limitations are further reflected by George W. Bush's end-of-war waffling over Venezuela and North

U.S. OWES ITS SUPREMACY TO DEATH OF OLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT...

The U.S. ruling class won the Cold War hands-down. The Soviet and Chinese revolutions both collapsed from the burden of fatal capitalist flaws in their political line (*for an in-depth analysis of this process, see PLP's documents* **Road to Revolution III** *and* **Road to Revolution IV**).

Send $1 to Challenge Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202

Toussaint + Clinton = Layoffs for Transit Workers

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 17 — Before the vote is even counted, the bitter fruits of the latest Transit Workers Union (TWU) sellout contract are becoming evident. The Toussaint leadership gave away the no-layoff clause. Now the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) is closing 177 token booths, which will slash 350 clerk jobs; is reducing 6-worker crews to 5; and is laying off 40 members of Local 153 who serve the workers' and retirees' Health Benefit Trust, which is being taken over by the MTA.

In addition, the merger of the Manhattan-Bronx bus lines with NYC Transit will force workers to take on added routes, cut more jobs and pit worker against worker by mixing seniority rosters. The absence of a no-layoff clause hands the bosses a weapon to threaten mass cutbacks if workers don't knuckle under to more concessions.

This is what happens when social-fascist union leaders rely on liberal Democrats like Senator Hillary Clinton and Basil Patterson to ward off a strike. Clinton supports the fascist USA Patriot Act and war in Iraq. She called the strike breaking Taylor Law a "wise law. Public employees should not legally be allowed to strike."

In 1966, TWU president Mike Quill tore up the anti-strike injunction based on the previous law banning strikes and went to jail rather than order workers back to work. The TWU won more in that walkout than any other contract, and forced the State Legislature to pass a special amnesty bill exempting the strikers from any penalties mandated by law.✪

BIG BUCKS FOR BANKS, WORKERS PAY THROUGH NOSE

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 17 — An analysis by the city's Independent Budget Office (IBO) revealed how capitalism uses its state apparatus to funnel workers' money into the coffers of Wall Street banks. The IBO stated that the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) proposed fare increase to $2 was based on a budget deficit for the next two years that was overstated by 300%. But it cited a $25 billion "storm cloud on the horizon" in terms of a projected debt over the next few years that would "justify" the proposed fare hike and more to follow.

It seems Governor Pataki and the MTA bosses borrowed extensively for repairs and new equipment rather than use the budget surpluses of the late 1990s. The IBO says, "Debt service will…absorb a growing portion of fare and other revenues." (New York Times, 1/17) A lawyer for the Straphangers Campaign said that the MTA's massive borrowing program is leading to a "debt that would explode and swallow up a huge chunk of the money that goes to operations."

The debt has currently climbed to $16 billion and "is projected to rise to $25 billion over the next few years, in large part…because direct state and city aid for capital projects has evaporated." (NYT) This could lead to a constant stream of fare hikes for the express purpose of assuring bond-rating agencies that the MTA's "outstanding debt is backed by revenues."

In other words, while the bosses spend $400 billion a year to make oil wars in the Middle East and massacre hundreds of thousands, workers will pay higher fares to maintain increasing profits for the banks to the tune of hundreds of millions in interest.✪

British Railworkers Refuse to Run Arms Train

LONDON, Jan. 9 — Two rail workers opposed to a war on Iraq refused to move a freight train carrying ammunition for British troops deployed in the Persian Gulf. The train was headed from Glasgow to the Glen Douglas base on Scotland's west coast, Europe's largest NATO weapons depot. They are the only pair at the Motherwell freight depot trained on the route of the West Highland line.

Union officials, also against this war, have refused to ask the workers to change their position, risking legal action and fines for contempt of court.

The rail workers are following a long-held internationalist tradition here. In 1973, dockworkers went on strike rather than load British-made arms headed for Chile's CIA-installed fascist dictator Pinochet after his assassination of Salvador Allende. In 1920 stevedores on London's East India Docks refused to move guns onto a ship chartered to take weapons to British interventionist troops and counter-revolutionaries trying to smash the Russian Revolution.

These actions set an example for workers worldwide in standing up for our class. Without workers to manufacture and transport weapons, the bosses would find it far more difficult to conduct their imperialist wars. The next step is for the working class to use these very weapons to wipe out the bosses and their capitalist profit system altogether.✪